

THEOLOGY OF THE LAITY

DISCIPLES IN THE WORLD

Session 1 - Relationship

Fr. JD Matherne

NOTES

A. WHO ARE THE LAITY?

- **CARDINAL ARINZE'S DEFINITION**

- Those who by *Baptism* are incorporated into Christ and are *sent* to witness to Christ in the *secular sphere*

B. WHAT DOES AN ACTIVE "ACTIVE" LAITY LOOK LIKE?

- **2 WARNINGS FROM JOHN PAUL II**

- the temptation of being so strongly interested in Church services and tasks that some fail to become actively engaged in their responsibilities in the professional, social, cultural and political world
- the temptation of legitimizing the unwarranted separation of faith from life, that is, a separation of the Gospel's acceptance from the actual living of the Gospel in various situations in the world

C. SECULAR CHARACTER – SALT, LIGHT, LEAVEN

- **LUMEN GENTIUM 31** - What specifically characterizes the laity is their *secular nature*

- **MATTHEW 5:13**: "You are the *salt* of the earth. But if salt loses its taste, with what can it be seasoned? It is no longer good for anything but to be thrown out and trampled underfoot."
- **MATTHEW 5:14**: "You are the light of the world. A city set on a mountain cannot be hidden."
- **LUMEN GENTIUM 31**: [The laity] live in the ordinary circumstances of family and social life, from which the very web of their existence is woven. They are called by God that by exercising their proper function and led by the spirit of the Gospel they may work for the sanctification of the world from within as leaven.

- **LETTER TO DIOGNETUS – SOUL OF SOCIETY**

- To sum up all in one word— what the soul is in the body, Christians are in the world. The soul is dispersed through all the members of the body, and Christians are scattered through all the cities of the world. The soul dwells in the body, yet is not of the body; and Christians dwell in the world, yet are not of the world. The invisible soul is guarded by the visible body, and Christians are known indeed to be in the world, but their godliness remains invisible.
- *FUGA MUNDI* - "Flee the World"
CONSECRATIO MUNDI - "Consecrate the World"

FOR PRAYER

D. YOU GO INTO THE VINEYARD TOO!

- “Why do you stand here idle all day? (Matthew 20:6)
- Witness through Word & Deed
 - Deed: The very testimony of their Christian life and good works done in a supernatural spirit have the power to draw men to belief and to God
 - Word: a true apostle looks for opportunities to announce Christ by words addressed either to non-believers with a view to leading them to faith, or to the faithful with a view to instructing, strengthening, and encouraging them to a more fervent life
- Lumen Gentium 33: Upon all the laity, therefore, rests the noble duty of working to extend the divine plan of salvation to all men of every epoch and in every land.

E. R-I-M: RELATIONSHIP – IDENTITY – MISSION

CHRISTIFIDELIS LAICI:

Only from inside the Church's mystery of communion is the "identity" of the lay faithful made known, and their fundamental dignity revealed. Only within the context of this dignity can their vocation and mission in the Church and in the world be defined.

- **R – RELATIONSHIP**
...from inside the Church's mystery of communion...
- **I – IDENTITY**
...is the "identity" of the lay faithful made known, and their fundamental dignity revealed. Only within the context of this dignity...
- **M – MISSION**
...can their vocation and mission in the Church and in the world be defined...

FOR PRAYER

F. RELATIONSHIP

- Established by Baptism
Matured through Confirmation
Nurtured by Eucharist
- **CARDINAL ARINZE:** The lay apostolate is a participation in the saving mission of the Church herself. All the laity, through their Baptism and Confirmation, commissioned to that apostolate by the Lord himself. They are nourished by the Holy Eucharist.
- **VATICAN II ON THE LAITY**
This life of intimate union with Christ in the Church is nourished by spiritual aids which are common to all the faithful, especially active participation in the sacred liturgy. These are to be used by the laity in such a way that while correctly fulfilling their secular duties in the ordinary conditions of life, they do not separate union with Christ from their life but rather performing their work according to God's will they grow in that union.

G. PRAYER

- God calls man first. Man may forget his Creator or hide far from his face; he may run after idols or accuse the deity of having abandoned him; yet the living and true God tirelessly calls each person to that mysterious encounter known as prayer. ***In prayer, the faithful God's initiative of love always comes first; our own first step is always a response.*** As God gradually reveals himself and reveals man to himself, prayer appears as a reciprocal call, a covenant drama. Through words and actions, this drama engages the heart. It unfolds throughout the whole history of salvation. (CCC 2567)
- **JOHN 15:4-5:** Remain in me, as I remain in you. Just as a branch cannot bear fruit on its own unless it remains on the vine, so neither can you unless you remain in me. I am the vine, you are the branches. Whoever remains in me and I in him will bear much fruit, because without me you can do nothing.

HOMEWORK

- Take 15 minutes per day to pray
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NOTES

FOR PRAYER